

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 6521**

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 85

**NOTE PREPARED:** Apr 18, 2011

**BILL AMENDED:** Apr 18, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Study of Schools with Low Graduation Rates.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Sen. Leising

**FIRST SPONSOR:** Rep. Behning

**BILL STATUS:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading - 2<sup>nd</sup> House

**FUNDS AFFECTED:** X GENERAL  
DEDICATED  
FEDERAL

**IMPACT:** State & Local

**Summary of Legislation:** (Amended) *Graduation Rates:* The bill requires the Education Roundtable to study the causes of low graduation rates in certain schools and how the graduation rates can be improved.

*School Bus Safety Belts:* The bill requires a person operating a school bus equipped with safety belts to provide instruction to the passengers on the school bus on the proper fastening of the safety belts at least one time a semester. It also requires a person operating a school bus to conduct a school bus passenger evacuation drill at least one time a semester.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2011.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** (Revised) *School Bus Safety Belts:* Under current law, school children riding in a school bus are not required to wear safety belts. This bill charges the State School Bus Committee to adopt and enforce rules that would require a school bus driver operating a school bus equipped with safety belts to instruct the passengers at least once a semester on the proper use of the seat belts. Additionally, school drivers would have to conduct an emergency passenger evacuation drill at least once a semester. Failure to do so would be grounds for dismissal, or cancellation of the contract if the employee is an independent contractor. The fiscal impact would be minimal.

The bill also requires the committee to have a regular meeting once each quarter (current law requires a meeting each month). There would be no fiscal impact because of this change as committee members do not currently receive per diem or reimbursement for travel expenses.

(Revised) *Graduation Rates*: This bill directs the Education Roundtable to study the following issues related to high school graduation rates:

- (1) The causes of low graduation rates in Indiana high schools;
- (2) The impact that school counselors, teachers, school administrators, and parents have on graduation rates;
- (3) Best practices that increase graduation rates in high schools;
- (4) Training and technical assistance opportunities for high schools to effectively address low graduation rates.

The bill directs the Roundtable to submit a status report on its progress to the Governor and the Legislative Council by December 1, 2012. A final report stating the findings, conclusions, and recommendations is to be submitted by November 1, 2013.

*Background - Graduation Rates*: According to the DOE, in 2010, 36 percent of public high schools had a graduation rate of between 90 and 100 percent; 2 percent (9 schools) had a graduation rate of less than 50 percent; 6 percent (21 schools) had a graduation rate between 50 and 70 percent. Approximately 84 percent of high school students graduated within four years.

*Background - Education Roundtable*: The Education Roundtable was formally inaugurated 1999. Its membership consists of business and community leaders and educators appointed by the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (co-chairs), and members of the legislature appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Its charter is to ensure that the state has competitive academic standards and that the state's ISTEP+ assessments verify those standards. It is also charged with setting the passing scores for ISTEP+, and making on-going recommendations on improving student achievement to the Governor and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

#### **Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:** (Revised) *School Bus Safety Belts*: There would be little cost associated with implementing this proposal for those school corporations with buses equipped with safety belts.

*Background*: Several school corporations currently have buses equipped with safety belts. One school corporation indicated that it decided to have seat belts installed on new buses because of safety concerns. The cost per bus is approximately \$10,000. The corporation indicated that evacuation drills are performed twice a year. Parents are notified of the drills.

#### **Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** State School Bus Committee; Education Roundtable

**Local Agencies Affected:** School corporations

**Information Sources:** Department of Education website, <http://www.doe.in.gov/gradrate/>; Monica Coburn,

Transportation Manager, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation, 812-376-4246; Ashley Gibson, Legislative Director, Indiana Department of Education, 317-232-6618.

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